

CITY OF ROCKVILLE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT
for
June 15, 2006
MEETING NO. 06-06

APPLICATION: COURTESY REVIEW

ADDRESS: 500 W. Montgomery Ave.

ACCEPTED: May 30, 2006

45 DAY LIMIT: Not applicable for courtesy review

OWNER: Chestnut Lodge Properties, Inc.

REQUEST: HDC comments on Chestnut Lodge detailed application and lighting/landscaping plan; Schedule of construction and rehabilitation of historic buildings; Rehabilitation and reconstruction plans for 5 historic buildings including additions to Lodge and Little Lodge; Relocation of the reconstructed Ice House to a location southeast of the Main Lodge.

STAFF: Cindy Kebba

BACKGROUND: The exploratory plan for Planned Residential Unit (PRU) development of the Chestnut Lodge site was reviewed by the HDC on July 21, 2005 and approved by the Mayor and Council on February 6, 2006. The applicant submitted the detailed application for the PRU on May 11, 2006. The HDC has review authority over any exterior alterations and new construction that occurs on the property within the West Montgomery Avenue and Rose Hill Farm Historic Districts, as well as opportunity to provide comments to the Planning Commission on changes that are proposed adjacent, abutting or confronting the historic districts.

The HDC was asked by the Mayor and Council, through the PRU process, to provide Courtesy Review comments of the overall detailed application to the Planning Commission. Staff requests that the HDC review and provide comments on the construction and historic building rehabilitation schedule submitted by the applicant. Staff also requests that the HDC review and provide preliminary comments on the rehabilitation and reconstruction plans for 5 of the historic buildings, including additions to the Lodge and Little Lodge, and the proposed relocation of the ice house to the Lodge parcel prior to acceptance of Certificate of Approval applications.

The HDC will review Certificate of Approval applications at a later date for the rehabilitation and reconstruction work on all of the historic buildings, the proposed relocation and reorientation of the ice house, street lighting fixtures in the historic district, the main entrance feature and other signage, and any other exterior alterations in the historic districts.

Previous Requests:

PRU2005-00022	Exploratory application for residential development, approved by Mayor and Council 2/6/06 [Resolution 3-06]
HDC2005-00336	Demolish Upper Cottage; re-construct Ice House, approved 7/21/05
Courtesy Reviews	Exploratory plan; exterior Lodge alterations and additions, 7/21/05

Property Area: 20.43 acres. Portions of the property are within the West Montgomery and Rose Hill Farm Historic Districts.

DISCUSSION OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

The detailed site plan/landscape plan, proposed construction schedule, and alterations to each of the historic buildings are discussed in the following section. Specific items for HDC discussion and comment include:

- The applicant's proposed construction phasing plan that could leave the Lodge 50% uncompleted and the Barn and Ice House uncompleted by the time all of the new residential construction is completed.
- The proposed location and orientation of the Ice House. Staff prefers the current, historical location in accordance with the Chestnut Lodge Design Guidelines, the City of Rockville Technical Guide for Demolition and Relocation and the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Reconstruction*, but concurs with the applicant that the owner of the Little Lodge may be overly burdened in maintaining three historic buildings, given that the stable will provide adequate accessory space for the Little Lodge property. Staff requests that the HDC consider the historic location and orientation vs. alternative locations/orientations for the ice house as well as the applicant's plans to fill the pit rather than conduct an archeological survey.
- Reconstruction of the stable. Staff requests that the HDC comment on the reconstruction of the stable which will require demolition of the existing structure and all new materials in the reconstruction.
- The stone entrance wall proposed at West Montgomery Avenue and Laird Street is massive and staff recommends reducing its size and simplifying it.
- At the June 21, 2005 Courtesy Review, the HDC requested that it and other interested parties have the opportunity to salvage materials and architectural elements of the Upper Cottage prior to its demolition.

1. Detailed plan (See Attachments 1&2 - Site Plan and Landscape and Lighting Plan)

Elements of the exploratory plan that were reviewed at the July 21, 2005 HDC Courtesy Review and that are incorporated into the detailed plan are noted below:

The applicant proposes granite curbs in the historic district to best protect trees (HDC recommended modified curb design that might be more sensitive to the historic setting at July 21, 2005 Courtesy Review). The Resolution states that either standard curb and gutter or modified curb, as approved by the Department of Public Works at the detailed application stage, be provided along both sides of the road.

The applicant follows HDC's recommendation for one brick sidewalk rather than sidewalks on both sides of Bullard Circle within the West Montgomery Avenue Historic District to limit the amount of paving.

The access road to the Stable will generally follow the current alignment rather than follow a new alignment off Bullard Circle as was proposed in the exploratory plan that the HDC reviewed.

The Mayor and Council increased the overall density of the development to 45 residential units to allow Frieda's Cottage to be used as a single-family house, as recommended by the HDC.

The Rose Hill Barn will be rehabilitated as a garage for the new house on lot 13 instead of being transferred to the owners of Rose Hill mansion. The HDC does not regulate use or ownership of historic properties.

The HDC will provide comments on the detailed site plan and the landscaping/lighting plan for the Planning Commission (Attachment 1). The entrance feature (see Drawing 29 in Landscaping/Lighting plan) is a long, curved stone wall on each side of the West Montgomery Avenue entrance that is more than 6 feet tall at the interior piers. Staff recommends that this feature be simplified and substantially reduced in length and height. The entrance could be identified with shorter piers, or a smaller stone wall with a sign on one side, and landscaping.

Staff also notes that there is a split rail fence shown on Parcel J within the proposed easement area of the Rose Hill Farm Historic District. The Resolution for the exploratory application (p.13) states that the easement shall prohibit placement of any structure or improvement (including but not limited to fences and landscaping) in the easement area without the approval of the HDC. The Chestnut Lodge Design Guidelines recommends maintaining the spatial and functional relationship between Rose Hill Mansion and the Barn and recommends leaving the visual plane between these two buildings open.

2. Schedule of construction and rehab of historic buildings (See Attachment 3, applicant's schedule of construction)

At the time of the June 21, 2005 Courtesy Review of the exploratory plan, the HDC asked for assurance that all of the rehabilitation and reconstruction work on the historic buildings be completed, in accordance with Certificates of Approval, prior to completion of the new construction portion of the project.

According to Resolution 3-06 for the Chestnut Lodge exploratory plan, "the applicant must submit for review and approval by the Planning Commission a phasing plan that shall include the timing of the rehabilitation of the Chestnut Lodge main building, the Rose Hill Barn, the Little Lodge, the Stable, the Icehouse and the construction of the new 36 single-family homes. Completion of the Main Lodge building, Rose Hill Barn, Little Lodge, the Stable and the Icehouse shall occur prior to the earlier of the following events: (1) the issuance of the 33rd building permit for a new single-family home or (2) a date certain as specified in the phasing plan. The phasing plan shall also provide for the timing of the conveyance of Frieda's Cottage to Peerless Rockville and the timing of its subsequent rehabilitation."

The applicant proposes commencing rehabilitation of the Little Lodge and reconstruction of the Stable as soon as Certificates of Approval are granted, the Record Plat is recorded and the building permits are issued.

However, the applicant proposes that building permits be issued for all of the new houses once the Lodge rehabilitation is 50% complete and rehabilitation/reconstruction is 100% complete on the Little Lodge, Stable, and Frieda's Cottage. The applicant proposes that the rehabilitation of the Barn and reconstruction of the Ice House be allowed to occur after the issuance of the last (36th) building permit for the new houses. The applicant claims that the Barn and the Ice House can not be completed until their associated structures are substantially completed (i.e. the new house on lot 13 for the Barn, and the Main Lodge for the icehouse).

HDC comments on this proposed construction and rehabilitation schedule will be forwarded to the Planning Commission.

3. Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Plans for Historic Buildings - (See Historic Preservation Drawings submitted by applicant, Attachment 4 and Supplement 4). All of the work will require Certificates of Approval.

a. Lodge Rehabilitation and Rear Addition - Convert to seven residential condominium units. (Historic Preservation Drawings DA03-DA21)

The proposed exterior alterations and rear addition to the Lodge follow the Chestnut Lodge Design Guidelines. The proposed alterations and addition also meet the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation* and City of Rockville Technical Guides for

Exterior Alterations. The HDC reviewed concept plans for the building's rehabilitation and addition at the July 21, 2005 meeting and had generally positive comments.

The Lodge will be converted into seven residential condominium units. The original building will contain four two-story units and the new rear addition will contain three stacked flats. The unsympathetic 20th century additions, including the fourth story addition along the south façade and Wing A at the southeast corner, will be removed. The remaining original building totals 15,658 gross square feet; 3,142 sq. ft. on each floor, basement through third floor, and 3,090 sq. ft. on the top (fourth) floor.

The new addition will be 14,753 gross sq. ft. in size. The largest floor will be the basement/underground garage with 5,928 sq. ft. The first and second floors will be 3,004 square feet and the top (third) floor will be 2,817 sq. ft. There will be no fourth floor so that the addition will be shorter than the original building. Upon completion, the entire Lodge will be 30,411 gross square feet.

General Rehabilitation Plan: The front (north and east elevations) porch will be restored to its original size and design and supported with new masonry piers. The original square columns and the balustrade will be replicated. The projecting balcony in the center of the fourth floor that was removed from the north façade will be replicated. Existing wood windows will be restored and missing windows will be replaced. Windows will have interior storm panels (to retain exterior appearance) for improved energy efficiency. New shutters will match original. New decorative window hoods will match original. The building will be painted to protect it (it has been painted and sandblasted in past and has been damaged) and will replicate original colors determined by paint analysis. The HDC only gives approval to paint brick, not color selection. The original slate roof will be replaced in-kind. The existing cornice will be repaired where possible, replaced if/where necessary. Roof-top mechanicals will be removed. The building will be supplied with all new mechanical/electrical/plumbing systems. Missing masonry details at tops of chimneys will be reconstructed.

Addition: The rear addition will be designed to be subservient, yet sympathetic in its appearance, to the original building and will be situated south and west of the main building, as recommended in the Chestnut Lodge Design Guidelines. The first two floors (units 3 and 4) will have porches on all elevations, approximately 8 feet in width, and will be reminiscent of the open porches that were originally on the hotel's rear façade. French doors will provide access to all but the small rear porches. Large spans of clear glazing were included to provide views of the treed vistas to the northwest. Unit 3 will have access to a porte cohere on the north side. The main roof will continue the slate mansard design of the original building. Windows will match those on original building.

The new underground garage will contain 16 spaces, including 2 handicap spaces. The entrance to the garage will be on the west side and there will be retaining walls at the entrance. Bicycle storage is shown in the garage.

b. Ice House – Dismantle and reconstruct to original design using salvageable materials where possible and relocate to Parcel 1, southeast of Lodge building. (Attachments 6, 7, 8 and 9 and Historic Preservation Drawings DA22 - DA27)

The HDC approved the applicant's request to dismantle and rebuild the Ice House, reusing salvageable materials wherever possible, on July 21, 2005 (HDC2005-00336). The Ice House will be reconstructed on a 4-inch concrete slab with parging over concrete blocks as the main foundation wall and a brick foundation wall at the projecting entrance. The Ice House will provide approximately 385 square feet of useable interior space. The wood shingle roof will be replaced in kind. Wood siding will be reused where possible or replaced in kind with varied existing lap width replicated. Doors and windows will be replicated. The applicant proposes to fill the ice pit with soil rather than conduct an archeological survey.

In the July 21, 2005 staff report, staff recommended that the HDC deny moving the rebuilt Ice House to Frieda's Cottage lot and instead recommended that it be rebuilt in its current location as part of the Little Lodge parcel or that the applicant submit a Certificate of Approval application for the HDC to approve the exact siting of this structure on the Lodge parcel or between the Lodge and the Little Lodge. At the time staff noted that the present location of the Ice House does not adversely impact the siting or reuse of any of the structures or roads on the proposed plan. The applicant withdrew its request to relocate the Ice House at the meeting. The applicant maintains that the current siting on the Little Lodge lot will create a burden to the future owner of the Little Lodge as that owner would be responsible for maintaining three historic buildings (Little Lodge, Stable and Ice House).

The location now proposed by the applicant for the reconstructed Ice House, to the southeast of the Lodge and approximately 35 feet from the edge of Bullard Circle, is preferable to the location originally proposed on Frieda's Cottage lot. (See Attachments 6, 7, 8 and 9). The current proposal retains a (modified) relationship between the Lodge and the Ice House. The applicant makes a case that this location has the least impact on mature trees surrounding the Lodge and it can serve as an accessory use (bicycle storage) to the Lodge condominium residents. The applicant also believes that the proposed location close to the new development's access road (Bullard Circle) and revised orientation will provide optimum visibility of the structure to the public. Staff has suggested a location behind the southwest corner of the new Lodge addition adjacent to the driveway access to the garage, but the applicant feels that a more publicly accessible location is preferable.

A viable use for the Ice House must be determined before it is dismantled. The applicant suggests that it can be used as bicycle storage for Lodge residents but there is a bike storage area already shown in the Lodge basement. The following conditions for reconstruction of the ice house were also noted as part of the approval letter for application HDC2005-00336, dated July 22, 2005:

1. The applicant must retain the current siting or submit a Certificate of Approval application for a new site for the reconstructed icehouse on the Lodge Parcel #1 or between the Lodge and the Little Lodge which is subject to approval by the HDC.
2. A Certificate of Approval application, including all required documentation (to Maryland Historical Trust standards) must be submitted for approval by the HDC before the icehouse is dismantled. An archeological survey of the icehouse pit is required and the scope of this survey must be approved by HDC staff. *(the ice house has been photographed to MHT standards and the photographs have been submitted to staff. The applicant instead would like to fill the pit to encapsulate its contents so that it may be surveyed in the future and possibly identify the location with marker(s).)*
3. The icehouse may not be dismantled before the Planning Commission final approval of the detailed application of the PRU and dismantling of the icehouse must be consistent with a development phasing plan that is approved by planning staff.

c. Barn/Milk House – rehabilitate for reuse as garage for new single-family house on Lot 13. (Historic Preservation Drawings DA28-DA31)

The rehabilitation plan is generally in accordance with the Chestnut Lodge Design Guidelines, the City of Rockville Technical Guides for Exterior Alterations and the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation*. However, some alterations (specifically window and door placement) are requested to enhance the Barn's function as a garage.

The applicant intends to retain all but one existing window (repair, repaint, reset existing glazing in new glazing compound where possible, replace broken/missing glazing where necessary, replace missing windows with matching.) The center window on the west façade will be replaced with a new door.

The two garage doors will be replaced with wood carriage style garage doors and repairs will be made to the two other existing doors. A new door will be added to the first floor rear (south façade). A new all-wood sliding door is proposed for the second floor of the rear to provide light to the second floor. A new interior staircase will be added for access.

The wood siding will be removed so that new wood sheathing and vapor barrier can be installed. The existing wood siding will then be re-installed on approximately 60% of the barn. Matching wood siding will be used for remaining 40% of the exterior, where the existing siding is beyond repair.

The standing seam metal roof will be replaced in kind.

d. Stable Reconstruction – reconstruct in current location, using new materials, as an accessory building to Little Lodge. (See Attachment 5 and Historic Preservation Drawings DA32-DA36)

A Certificate of Approval to demolish the Stable was withdrawn by the applicant prior to the July 21, 2005 HDC meeting. As stated in the July 21, 2005 HDC staff report concerning the stable, “A faithful reproduction of a historic structure built with the same craft techniques and using original materials, methods and design is extremely costly and generally required only for the most significant structures. Staff is not recommending this approach with the stable and ice house. It is recommending salvage and reuse of original materials to the greatest extent possible and general reconstruction to the original appearance. This does not indicate modern trusses and modular wall systems, but using commonly available lumber and materials.”

The applicant’s historic preservation consultant, R. Christopher Goodwin & Associates, Inc. submitted a statement in support of reconstruction of the stable on May 25, 2006 (Attachment 5). This statement was prepared following structural analysis of the building by Adtek Engineers, Inc. in 2005 and further analysis in 2006 to identify character-defining elements of the Stable and any historic materials that could be reused. The asbestos siding was removed to reveal the physical evolution of the building and identify original materials. This analysis revealed three major periods of construction, c. 1887, c.1900 and c. 1960 and evidence documenting the building’s early design including ghosts of early door and window openings. However, no materials were found to have adequate reuse potential.

The applicant intends to reconstruct the Stable, by removing the existing deteriorated structure and duplicating significant design features through new construction. Reconstruction is defined by the Secretary of the Interior’s *Standards for Reconstruction* as “depicting, by means of new construction, the form, features, and details of a non-surviving site, landscape, building, structure or object for the purposes of replicating its appearance at a specific period of time and in its historic location.”

The Stable will be reconstructed as an accessory use for the rehabilitated Little Lodge. The new design duplicates the two-story gable main block. The east elevation shed addition will be reduced in length by 12 ½ feet on the southeast corner where the silo was located until the c. 1960 renovation. The roof pitch of the shed addition will be altered to allow automobile access. Early door and window configuration will be incorporated in the new building.

The building will be clad in wood, German lap siding with simple corner boards. All doors will be wood. Windows will be wood and will have wood storms.

At this time, the applicant is seeking the HDC’s general agreement to the design plan for reconstruction of the stable in its current location and using new materials.

e. Little Lodge rehabilitation and addition – rehabilitate for use as a single family residence (Historic Preservation Drawings DA37 - DA42)

Plans for rehabilitation of the Little Lodge and a new rear addition are in accordance with the Chestnut Lodge Design Guidelines, the City of Rockville's Technical Guides for Exterior Alterations, and the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation*.

The Little Lodge's appearance will be unchanged as viewed from the front. A kitchen addition (496 sq. ft.) and covered porch is proposed for the rear of the first floor of the Little Lodge and will be totally behind the existing building. The addition is in appropriate scale to the main house and retains the second floor window fenestration.

The elaborate stairway, a defining interior feature of this house, will be restored. Window air conditioning units will be removed as central air conditioning will be provided. The east side porch and roof top deck will be restored.

f. Frieda's Cottage – rehabilitate for use as a single-family house

No plans for rehabilitation of Frieda's Cottage have been submitted. The applicant's schedule of construction states that the owner will deed Frieda's Cottage to Peerless Rockville upon recordation of the Record Plat. The rehabilitation of Frieda's Cottage will commence within 150 days after the recordation of the Record Plat and the recording of the deed to Peerless Rockville.

Eileen McGuckian, Executive Director of Peerless Rockville, is in agreement with this schedule.

Attachments:

1. Detailed Application Site Plan
2. Landscape and Lighting Plan
3. Schedule of Construction of Chestnut Lodge submitted by applicant
4. Historic Preservation Drawings and supplement, Oehrlein & Associates
5. Statement submitted by R. Christopher Goodwin & Associates, Inc. in support of the Certificate of Approval Application for the Reconstruction of the Stable
6. Statement submitted by Chestnut Lodge Properties, Inc. in support of relocating the ice house to a site near the main Lodge
7. Historic Parcel Exhibit showing applicant's proposed Ice house location
8. Portion of landscape and lighting plan showing applicant's proposed Ice house location
9. Landscape detail plan showing applicant's proposed Ice house location